

THE NATURE - CONSERVANCY

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CONNECTICUT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY, 1965

"When we try to pick out something by itself
we find it hitched to everything else in the
universe."

John Muir, "Daily Journals"

OPEN SPACE TAX RELIEF

The following report has been sent to your Editor by Mr. Alexander Bergstrom. As Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Council of Conservation Commissions, Mr. Bergstrom keeps close tabs on the pending legislation concerning conservation. He comments in the following report on the problem of taxation of Open Spaces.

The October issue of Connecticut Government (published by the Institute of Public Service, University of Connecticut, Storrs) carried comments by two town assessors on Public Act No. 490 (1963). This act set up procedures by which tax relief might be obtained on land while held as open space. It is supported on the basis that it relieves the tax pressures to sell open space for real estate development, and buys time for the town at modest cost. It has been opposed by some on the basis that it does not recapture any taxes for the town if and when the land is finally sold for other purposes. Probably legislation will be introduced in the 1965 General Assembly to modify or repeal the act. Commissioner Joseph N. Gill (of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources) strongly supports the act in general, and feels that insufficient time has passed since it was enacted to enable an appraisal of any weak points needing change.

NATURAL AREAS, AERIAL SPRAYING AND CONSERVATION

An important and significant scientific comparison is in the process of occurring at our Chapter's Burnham Brook Preserve in the Town of East Haddam. This involves a town program of aerial spraying of chemical poisons (probably Sevin) in an attempt to control the gypsy moth in the forests. The Town of East Haddam has plans to aerial spray many of its woodlands this Spring. We have requested town officials and the State Board of Pesticide Control to insure that no contamination by aerial spraying occurs to our Preserve including contamination by air drift or by run-off. We anticipate some cooperation along with some compromise. We are hopeful that the Board of Pesticide Control, with other state agencies, will undertake a comprehensive monitoring study to record the results of this town chemical poison program.

We feel the state has an important leadership responsibility in this matter. All acknowledge that the poisons will kill many gypsy moths and therefore the sprayed areas will probably have noticeably less temporary defoliation this year than unsprayed areas. The additional questions the state should ask and study include such questions as what will be the side effects, if any, which occur to wildlife such as the bees and ac-

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NATURAL AREAS ... (con't. from pg. 1)

quatic insects in the sprayed areas, etc. Harmful side effects have occurred elsewhere from Sevin. Also, it would be helpful to know what differences, if any, will there be between the quality of the trees in our Preserve compared with trees in the sprayed areas at the end of this growth year, and in subsequent years.

The having of distance in one's viewpoint is one of the basic concepts of conservation. The questions asked and studied should include some of long range in point of time. From the State's viewpoint the long range questions are far more important than the short run economic or aesthetic considerations. The State should not approve observations which include only noting the death of gypsy moths and lessened temporary defoliation. The State should have a program to answer questions about the side effects, if any, that occur in one week, one month and years afterwards which could include asking whether any real help results to the trees themselves beyond the avoiding of temporary defoliation.

Our Natural Areas are available to act as excellent control areas to allow scientific observation, state or private, to see what, if any, beneficial or harmful results occur from programs such as massive chemical aerial spraying. If transitory avoiding of temporary partial defoliation is the only detectable result the costs and risks of massive chemical poisons being introduced into our environment hardly justifies public approval. If our political climate calls for projects which primarily justify their existence in that they keep our economy moving or growing certainly the State should not undertake biologically unsound and dangerous projects.

We were pleased to hear that the Board of Pesticide Control this

year did not approve and therefore made illegal the use of the widely recognized dangerous residual chemical poison DDT for aerial spray programs in Connecticut. Their action was one year late but is better now than later. They have approved use of the poison Sevin and some doubt the safety of Sevin for massive aerial chemical poison programs. We urge caution which is another basic concept of conservation.

LIST OF MEMBERSHIP (con't. from pg. 6)

South Glastonbury (con't.)

Mr. & Mrs. R. C. Powell, Jr.
Miss Amy L. Pratt
Mrs. Frederick L. Pratt
Mr. & Mrs. Dan E. Reardon
Mr. & Mrs. Granville Taylor
Mr. & Mrs. David A. Washburn

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

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Connecticut Chapter Secretary:

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Wethersfield 9, Conn.

Newsletter Editor:

Mrs. Richard M. Bowers
Box 147
Old Mystic, Conn.

Editor's Note: The Editor invites comments from the readers.

REPORTS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

As the Annual Meeting has occurred since our last Newsletter, the Editor shall attempt in the following pages to bring briefly to the membership some extracts of reports given at the Annual Meeting. Also for the first time we shall include a listing of the membership for our readers.

Election of Officers:

At the Annual Meeting, held on November 7, 1964 at the White Memorial Foundation Museum, the following officers of our State Chapter were elected:

Mrs. John M. Hamilton, Chairman	Mrs. Richard D. Wolf, Secretary
Mrs. P. Eric Plehn, Vice-Chairman	Mr. Richard M. Bowers, Treasurer

And re-elected as members of the Board of Directors were:

Mr. Henry Hicock	Mr. Gordon Loery
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Subsequent to the Annual Meeting, at an Executive Meeting held January 9, 1965, the Board approved the Chairman's appointment of Mr. Robert F. Kunz as an Interim Director.

Natural Area Reports:

Akeley Tract: Mystic. The encroachment of a redesigned town highway this year has had drainage effects upon the tract; drainage designs were modified but there still is erosion underneath the thick vine cover. It is hoped that this will be cured with soil cover.

Bantam River: Litchfield. Ten land-owners along the Bantam River have now signed covenants with The Nature Conservancy. These will assure the permanent protection of the natural beauty of this stream flowing through their properties. The Committee is at work attempting to acquire similar commitments from the remaining owners.

Barn Island: Stonington. Studies on this Natural Area have been limited to reconnaissance surveys of the general vegetational pattern. Further observations will be made by Drs. Egler and Niering this summer. Permanent photographic stations will be established also with the assistance of Mrs. John Hamilton.

Burnham Brook: East Haddam. Stream flow and water temperature studies have been taken for two summers on the brook which for two dry seasons has slowed but never stopped. Fish censuses have shown this to be a breeder stream for brook trout. Studies are being conducted on vascular plants of the Preserve. Also a cover type analysis is being conducted. Records are also being kept on birds and mammals.

Cotton Hollow: Glastonbury. Another key parcel near the Conservancy tract has been given to the Town as a Natural Area by the Cotton Hollow Club. This 50-acre piece will be jointly supervised by the Town Conservation Commission and the Conservancy's Glastonbury Sub-Chapter.

Folly Brook: Wethersfield. The tract, now 3/5 owned by the Conservancy, has subtle changes constantly. Black-crowned night herons appear to be surviving the disturbance of the new Highway (I-91). Other birds have disappeared: meadowlark, kingfisher and fewer American egrets. A new outlet to Folly Brook begun a couple of years ago by a storm obstruction is now the main outlet and curves are again softening the man-made channel.

Gallup Marsh: Old Mystic. This marsh has been used for studies by the Marine Research Laboratory of U-Conn. this past year. A special study of parasites has been conducted during the Summer of 1964. A single phragmites clump has been measured in attempts to study its progress over the years.

Mamacoke & Bolleswood: New London. Additional resurvey to document changes in the vegetation of Bolleswood was accomplished this past summer. A detailed soil survey has also been completed on the four permanent transect lines and these data are now being compiled in an attempt to correlate soils and vegetation.

Perry Natural Area: Stonington. It has been decided in this Natural Area section of the Pequot-sepos Wildlife Sanctuary to maintain only one rudimentary trail. This year a preliminary vegetation survey was done by Drs. Egler and Niering. The area has been posted according to its name and a survey is now being conducted.

Sile Hall Pond: Winchester. A new tract this year, this 38-acre tract was the gift of Mr. Bethuel Webster. The northern half of a small bog pond and adjoining woodland, the Conservancy has here a typical sample of bog heath vegetation in a lovely hardwoods forest setting.

Taine Mountain: Burlington. This tract was not effected by a minor local zone variation this year. Annual payments are still being made on the Washer Tract. Donations toward this annual \$2,000 payment are always welcomed.

Walcott Preserve (Beckley Bog): Norfolk. Active steps have been taken in the purchase of the Anstett Tract, adding 230 acres to the north end of the bog and its surrounding meadow. A Fund Drive is now being conducted to raise \$18,000 to meet the loan made by National for this purchase. This is perhaps the finest northern type bog in Connecticut and is filled with a wide variety of bog heath flora: sundews, pitcher plants, etc. A study, under a grant from the National Science Foundation, is currently being done on the beaver colony in Beckley Pond.

Warburg Tract: Greenwich. Acquisition of this 3.9-acre tract occurred by gift of Mr. James P. Warburg in October 1964. This very pretty key piece is directly across the Byram River from holdings of the National Audubon Society.

Other of our Natural Areas have not been active enough to give full reports this year. As activities occur we shall give reports during the year.

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